



UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING: **Policy Challenges and Recommendations**

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APRIL 2009



Project Forum at National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) is a cooperative agreement funded by the Office of Special Education Programs of the U.S. Department of Education. The project carries out a variety of activities that provide information needed for program improvement and promote the utilization of research data and other information for improving outcomes for students with disabilities. The project also provides technical assistance and information on emerging issues and convenes small work groups to gather expert input, obtain feedback and develop conceptual frameworks related to critical topics in special education.

This report was supported by the U.S. Department of Education (Cooperative Agreement No. H326F050001). However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Department should be inferred.

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Acknowledgements

Project Forum wishes to acknowledge CAST, and especially Janet Gronnenberg and David Gordon, for their collaboration in developing all aspects of this UDL forum. CAST provided excellent collaboration as they delivered the Webinar, regularly monitored and contributed to the Sharedwork site, and shared their expertise and knowledge to develop the virtual and face-to-face forum and serve as facilitators throughout the forum.

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INTRODUCTION

Universal design for learning (UDL) is a growing practice across the nation, one that is increasingly referenced in education policy briefs, research literature, teacher professional development, and books and articles for educators. Numerous states and universities have some type of UDL initiative underway. The Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)¹ developed the theoretical framework and guidelines of UDL that promote the proactive design of curricula (including learning goals, instructional methods and materials and assessments) that simultaneously customize learner supports while minimizing curriculum barriers thereby expanding learning opportunities for all individuals. This framework provided a strong foundation for the definition of UDL included in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act 2008 (HEA) which is called the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA).²

Universal design for learning (UDL) means a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that— (A) provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and (B) reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient. [HEOA, P.L. 110-315, §103(a)(24)].

The inclusion of UDL in the reauthorization of the HEA demonstrates its escalating importance in the education field. UDL concepts and practices are not yet broadly integrated into all education policy. Policy has been slow to catch up to this quickly growing practice. To address that disparity, Project Forum at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) held a policy forum calling upon general and special educators including representatives of early childhood, related and pupil services, local and state administrators, institutions of higher education (IHEs), and national organizations to first identify challenges to UDL implementation and then develop policy recommendations to address those challenges. Project Forum conducted this policy forum as part of its cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in December 2008.

¹ <http://www.cast.org>.

² The HEA was reauthorized in 2008 by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. The law is available on line at http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ315.110.pdf.

BACKGROUND

UDL is implemented at a variety of levels—local education agencies (LEAs),³ school buildings, individual classrooms, and IHEs—but without consistent policies to support implementation. There is a multitude of materials, technical assistance and professional development available from CAST⁴ and other centers (e.g. Center for Implementing Technology in Education,⁵ Family Center on Technology and Disability⁶) to support front-line educators and administrators in their implementation of UDL. Recently, the U.S. Department of Education released its *Tool Kit on Teaching and Assessing Students with Disabilities: Universal Design for Learning*,⁷ which provides a collection of resources on UDL to help policymakers, educators and parents identify and implement policies and practices related to UDL. Programs with promise or evidence of effective UDL practices can be found throughout the nation from early childhood through postsecondary education,⁸ but there remains much opportunity for growth and acceptance of UDL as a national best practice.

Since 2006, the National UDL Task Force⁹ consisting of more than 25 national education and disability organizations has been working to improve instruction and assessment for all students by incorporating UDL into policy and to promote UDL through grants, technical assistance and a communication campaign. The work of this task force was instrumental in the addition of UDL into the HEOA. The task force also has provided recommended legislative language¹⁰ for reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.¹¹

Currently there is no direct reference to UDL in federal K-12 legislation, including No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). However, there are references to universal design in IDEA. The Act references the Assistive Technology Act, which defines universal design as:

a concept or philosophy for designing and delivering products and services that are usable by people with the widest possible range of functional capabilities, which include products and services that are directly accessible (without requiring assistive technologies) and products and services that are interoperable with assistive technologies [29 U.S.C. 3002 §3(19)].

³ <http://www.projectforum.org/docs/UDLImplementationinSixLEAs.pdf> for a summary of UDL implementation from six local education agencies

⁴ <http://www.cast.org/research/udl/index.html>

⁵ <http://www.cited.org/index.aspx>

⁶ <http://www.fctd.info/>

⁷ Available at <http://www.osepideasthatwork.org/UDL/index.asp>

⁸ See Appendix A for more information.

⁹ <http://www.udl4allstudents.org> for a list of participating organizations

¹⁰ Refer to <http://www.advocacyinstitute.org/UDL/NCLB.shtml>.

¹¹ In its most recent reauthorization, the ESEA was called the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and is often referred to by this name.

IDEA refers to the use of universal design principles in developing and administering assessments [34 CFR §300.160(g)], and authorizes activities to support the research, development, dissemination and use of technology with universal design principles so that technology is accessible and maximizes access to and participation in the general education curriculum [34 CFR §300.704(b)(4)]. Universal design principles are important, but not sufficient without integration of UDL since UDL extends the concept of universal design to the field of education and provides a research-based framework for designing curriculum.

In addition, IDEA 2004 includes a new standard, the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS), that states must adopt in a timely manner for the purposes of providing instructional materials to blind persons or other persons with print disabilities [34 CFR §300.172(a)(1)] to maximize access to the general education curriculum. It is generally acknowledged that accessibility is important but not sufficient for improving outcomes for all learners, thus providing the impetus to establish UDL in our educational programs at all levels. The references to universal design and accessibility in IDEA lay the groundwork for explicitly integrating UDL into K-12 general and special education policy.

In the HEOA, universal design for learning has been explicitly defined and is integrated into the programs that are part of the law. The law states that recipients of ‘teacher quality partnership grants’ and ‘teach to reach grants’ must offer preparation programs that enable teachers to understand and use “strategies consistent with the principles of *universal design for learning*” [P.L. 110-315, §202(d)(1)(A)(ii)], and “to integrate technology effectively into curricula and instruction, including technology consistent with the principles of *universal design for learning*” [P.L. 110-315, §204(a)(G)(i)]. In addition, UDL should also be incorporated into evaluation and performance measures for each preparation program. In reference to model demonstration projects to provide technical assistance or professional development for post-secondary education faculty, staff and administrators, the Act indicates that

A grant, contract, or cooperative agreement awarded under this subpart shall be used to carry out one or more of the following activities:“(A) TEACHING METHODS AND STRATEGIES.—The development of innovative, effective, and efficient teaching methods and strategies, consistent with the principles of universal design for learning... [P.L. 110-315, §762(b)(2)(A)].

Additionally, HEOA calls for the establishment of a national technical assistance center that will develop and provide “...training modules for higher education faculty on exemplary practices for accommodating and supporting postsecondary students with disabilities across a range of academic fields, which may include *universal design for learning*...” [P.L. 110-315, §777(4)(B)(ii)].

This language in the HEOA may serve as an impetus for change that can lead to the integration of UDL into other education policies and practices. The UDL policy forum participants expressed support for this forward movement and this proceedings document describes challenges to UDL implementation, policy recommendations and action plans to address those challenges.

METHODOLOGY

Outcomes and recommendations from CAST's UDL Summit¹² held in 2007 provided a basis and direction for the UDL policy forum. Project Forum collaborated with CAST to conduct the multi-phased forum in order to identify challenges for UDL implementation. It consisted of the following phases:

- First, a virtual forum process was conducted starting with a live webinar¹³ on UDL using *iVocalize*® to serve as the kick-off event for a facilitated virtual discussion on challenges to UDL implementation. Project Forum and CAST staff generated a list of invitees for the webinar and virtual discussion, and encouraged them to invite other individuals interested in UDL to join the discussion. Approximately 90 participants joined the webinar the day it was presented, October 6, 2008.
- Immediately following the webinar, approximately 100 participants entered into a virtual discussion on the challenges to UDL implementation at www.sharedwork.org¹⁴ that Project Forum and CAST facilitated through November 3, 2008. *SharedWork* served as an asynchronous, informal communication vehicle to promote dialogue and understanding across many stakeholders interested in UDL over an extended timeframe. Participation was voluntary and open to all interested parties.
- Finally, for the face-to-face portion of the forum, Project Forum and CAST generated a list of approximately 50 invitees, some of whom had also attended CAST's 2007 UDL Summit. The majority of these invitees also participated in the virtual forum to identify challenges. The invitees included a variety of stakeholders who are knowledgeable about UDL at the building, local, state and federal levels and who are familiar with UDL policy. The participants represented parents, local school administrators, state education administrators, IHE faculty—including early childhood representatives, researchers, national organizations, technical assistance providers and the U.S. Department of Education. The face-to-face forum was held December 1-3, 2008 in Alexandria, VA. See Appendix B for the participant list.

Project Forum used the definition of UDL from the HEOA, and provided the following definition of the word 'policy' to help participants collaborate effectively to develop policy recommendations:

For the purpose of this policy forum, policy is a principle, plan or course of action based on a combination of basic decisions and commitments pursued by a government, organization or individual.

¹² http://www.cast.org/publications/bycast/UDL_Summit_Summary_All_Invitees_11_29_07.pdf

¹³ Archive available at www.sharedwork.org under the heading, "Universal Design for Learning Policy Issues."

¹⁴ SharedWork.org is a website maintained by the IDEA Partnership at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), a U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)-funded project for the purpose of connecting stakeholders in the national Communities of Practice (CoP), participating states' CoP and Practice Groups to develop their shared work.

The expected outcomes of the forum were to:

- identify challenges to UDL implementation across federal, state, district and school levels, particularly in the areas of content standards, instructional methods and materials and assessments, and technology use and support;
- develop policy recommendations for federal, state, district and school policy makers and administrators to support UDL implementation across the areas of content standards, instructional methods and materials and assessments, and technology use and support; and
- share concrete examples of how state and local policies on UDL can support strategies to improve performance indicators such as graduation, drop-out, assessment, least restrictive environment, transition and post-school outcomes.

The face-to-face forum began with a panel presentation and continued for one and a half days to refine challenges identified in the virtual forum and develop policy recommendations and action plans to address the challenges for UDL implementation.

UDL PANEL PRESENTATION

The policy forum opened with a panel of forum participants sharing their perspectives on UDL implementation, policies that support it and needed changes. The panelists were: Patricia Ralabate (National Education Association), representing a national perspective; Margo Izzo (Ohio State University), representing a higher education perspective; Jeff Diedrich (Michigan Integrated Technology Supports), representing a state perspective; and Mary Forde (Greenwich Public Schools, Connecticut) representing a local perspective. Nancy Reder (NASDSE) served as the moderator. The panelists introduced UDL as the topic of discussion while reviewing its current status and shared their perspectives of UDL implementation across the education field. Summaries of the panel members' presentations and discussion with forum attendees follow.

A National Perspective

The National UDL Task Force has been working collaboratively to develop policy briefs and fact sheets, provide recommended legislative language for upcoming reauthorization of federal education laws and communicate the importance of UDL to national organizations. The task force is also collaborating with OSEP and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) to jointly model collaboration to support UDL. Information about UDL has been included in partner organizations' annual conferences and some are providing professional development on UDL. The task force believes UDL is applicable to all students and recommends funding for UDL research. A main challenge faced at the national level is promoting UDL as an effective practice for all students not as only a special education practice. An additional challenge is the inclusion of UDL in legislative language at the national policy level.

A Higher Education Perspective

Over 30 institutions of higher education have received funds from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) to ensure students with disabilities receive a quality higher education. During the technical assistance workshop coordinated by OPE, UDL was defined and suggested as an appropriate activity to improve teaching methods and strategies. The following example was provided in materials provided at that workshop:

Some projects have held summer institutes for college faculty and disability support coordinators to provide them with recommendations regarding making their curriculum more accommodating based on Universal Design for Learning. (Technical Assistance Workshop, April 8, 2008).

Despite the preparation of over 80 grant applications, and the award of over \$6 million dollars to 23 IHEs during FY 2008, UDL is often confused with a wide range of acronyms and terminology used such as RTI (Response to Intervention), inclusion, and PBS (Positive Behavioral Supports). Clarity of these terms and how they interconnect is needed across all departments in colleges of education in order to prepare future teachers.

Many faculty within colleges of education regularly model UDL principles and a few teach courses specific to UDL, but there is limited, if any, policy to support UDL implementation within individual IHEs. Teacher preparation programs often incorporate many examples for ways students can engage in the content and express what they learned through multiple assessment methods, but the majority of faculty across the university continue to teach how they were taught—primarily through lecture. While many universities are using course management systems, some of these systems do not adequately align to the principles of UDL, as evidenced by numerous accessibility complaints filed by both faculty and students with disabilities

Additionally, UDL may be represented conceptually in university mission and goal statements, but the term itself is not often used. A main challenge faced at the higher education level is the lack of clear terminology for UDL and inclusion of UDL within policy, mission statements, course design, instructional methods and assessment. However, the passage of the HEOA may help address these challenges since it defines UDL and provides for its implementation in higher education.

A State Perspective

UDL emerged in Michigan largely as a result of the 2006 state board of education policy on universal education.¹⁵ Viewing UDL as a significant paradigm shift in education, a group of diverse stakeholders met in 2007 to plan strategies for UDL implementation. At the state level, through collaboration with CAST, stakeholders are working to describe, in practical terms, what UDL does and does not look like and how UDL can be incorporated in the frame of the State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR). Michigan benefits from the advocacy of its state director of special education and the state board of education, which has included UDL in board policy regarding grant applications by requiring applicants to describe how

¹⁵http://www.michigan.gov/documents/UnivEdBrochureFINAL_incl_152066_7_Glossary_03-02-06a.pdf

they will meet the needs of the broadest range of students, largely through the framework of UDL. Further, the application of this board policy has also impacted teacher certification standards. Challenges faced at the state level include the theory to implementation gap, lack of exemplars, and a system that in many respects perpetuates the continued division between general education and special education. To address these issues, Michigan has recently initiated the design and implementation of Michigan's Integrated Improvement Initiatives (MI3). MI3 supports the adoption, coordination and implementation of research-based strategies. A key component is using research available through the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN).¹⁶ In early 2008, MI3 received a state implementation and scale-up of evidence based practices (SISEP) grant to assist with the effective implementation and scale-up of evidence-based practices statewide. An intended state outcome for the work with SISEP is the "ongoing development of a learning community, among Michigan Department of Education funded initiatives, for the purpose of effective installation and implementation fidelity of quality evidence based interventions." UDL became the focus of this work.

A Local Perspective

Greenwich Public Schools, an LEA in Connecticut, revised its teacher evaluation process so administrators consider how teachers use UDL in their classrooms and emphasize that UDL is good teaching. This LEA is also revising its report cards to reflect UDL so that communications with families incorporate a UDL philosophy. Greenwich stresses that UDL is about instruction, not technology, but that technology can support UDL. The LEA does not have specific written policy about UDL, but engages in conversations to support inclusive education and promote the collaboration of general and special education to integrate UDL into schools to support all students. This perspective is also integrated into new teacher orientation. Challenges faced at the local level include convincing high school teachers of the importance and value of UDL, helping teachers acquire materials that incorporate UDL and collaborating with IHEs to link UDL practices at both the high school and post-secondary education level.

Summary of Panel Presentation

Clear and succinct terminology and in-depth understanding of the principles and practice of UDL and how they can benefit every student are needed at all levels. UDL also needs to be viewed as a general education practice, not a special education practice.

Panel members recommended

- continuing to highlight the principles and strategies of UDL while there is a huge effort for course redesign in higher education;
- encouraging collaborative efforts between IHEs and states with the provision of coaches to work with classroom teachers;
- providing opportunities to share information with and collaborate with textbook and instructional material designers; and
- training teachers so they may choose appropriate materials to support UDL implementation.

¹⁶ <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~nirn/>

CHALLENGES TO UDL IMPLEMENTATION

Participants in the virtual forum identified a variety of challenges that were summarized into five groups: 1) awareness and outreach; 2) leadership/systems; 3) data collection and assessment; 4) technology and learning/funding; and 5) professional development. After a brief review of the challenges identified through the virtual forum, the participants at the face-to-face forum engaged in discussion, consolidation, refinement and identification of ten top challenges. The top ten challenges identified for UDL implementation were:

- Engage and excite educators at all levels: preservice, in-service, mentors, coaches and higher education faculty.
- Create and facilitate community capacity (including leadership) to promote the principles of UDL.
- Communicate and ensure that all stakeholders understand the problems UDL addresses and the benefits/solutions UDL offers.
- Integrate UDL and technology within school cultures and communities.
- Find intersections among standards to infuse UDL and measure growth and progress of teachers (but not as a formal evaluation tool).
- Identify and provide supports needed for the effective implementation of UDL that include existing practices and initiatives as well as newly available tools and resources to encourage and sustain engagement of educators and families.
- Re-examine our current systems through two lenses: those that impede the implementation of UDL and those that encourage the collaboration and cooperation needed to implement UDL (e.g., inclusion).
- Collect and apply appropriate and functional data (including technology use) to inform and support users (i.e., students, educators, administrators, parents/community, evaluators, publishers and legislators).
- Ensure multiple methods of assessments are developed using UDL principles while maintaining reliability and validity.
- Provide incentives for commercial enterprises and the content/curriculum developers to broaden usability for all.

In summary, participants identified challenges as effectively communicating; gaining excitement from the field; examining current systems; motivating leaders and policymakers to build or increase capacity; using data to inform and support UDL implementation; ensuring assessment methods incorporate UDL; and providing incentives for development of curricula, software, and textbooks that integrate UDL.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The forum participants developed recommendations to address the ten top challenges they identified. They then sorted the recommendations based on the perceived ease of implementation and level of impact (high versus low). Table 1 provides the list of sorted recommendations.

Table 1. Recommendations sorted by ease of implementation and level of impact.

Easier to Implement / High Level of Impact
Build a consortium from which will evolve a national knowledge network that impacts the development and implementation of content standards, professional development standards and accreditation standards based on UDL principles.
Develop a communications/dissemination plan for promoting UDL for various content areas (e.g. reading and math) that is targeted to responsibilities and interests of various stakeholders, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a series of US Department of Education broadcasts on UDL; ▪ UDL leadership academies; ▪ a community of practice for UDL; ▪ a UDL website; and ▪ alignment with other practices such as co-teaching, response to intervention and positive behavioral supports.
The Secretary of Education should convene a technical review board or working group [Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), Office of Post-Secondary Education (OPE), Institute of Education Sciences (IES), etc.] to develop and publicize a reasonable set of features/recommendations for educational publishers/developers that support implementation of UDL based on the principles outlined in the UDL Guidelines, Version 1.0. ¹⁷
Require new and revised grant applications to include language that grant activities will reflect UDL principles. (Note: the language will appear as a statement that the grantee has followed US DOE-supported principles of UDL rather than as a legally-binding assurance, e.g., 508 compliant, etc.)
Establish federal competitive grant program to transform existing practices to reflect the UDL framework in the following areas: standards, instructional methods, curriculum, accountability/assessment systems, and professional development beginning with a needs assessment and including evaluation and national dissemination of what works.
Require every personnel preparation grant in general and special education to include instruction on UDL implementation and to teach UDL in a manner that reflects the principles of UDL.

¹⁷ Available at <http://www.cast.org/publications/UDLguidelines/version1.html>.

Encourage local school boards and where appropriate, state school boards, to adopt policies requiring curriculum adoption committees to consider UDL principles in evaluating and selecting curricula, and include a broad representation of stakeholders in discussions of curriculum adoption.

Challenging to Implement / High Level of Impact

Develop and fund mechanisms for reviewing assessment tools and practices through the lens of UDL at state education agency (SEA), local education agency (LEA) and building levels.

Ensure continuity between assessment and instruction by aligning use of UDL principles.

Build and facilitate community capacity through activities such as:

- funding for UDL research;
- developing a UDL model demonstration/data collection and evaluation center (similar to Positive Behavior Support Center);
- creating state and LEA consortia to develop model UDL initiatives (including IHE's, SEAs, LEAs, associations); and
- designing funded priorities for preservice, in-service and leadership grants that incorporate UDL.

Include as part of state educator/teacher certification the requirement that continuing education addresses effective use of technology, instructional techniques and strategies consistent with principles of UDL.

Embed UDL in a comprehensive professional development system that includes:

- preservice program accreditation;
- university-wide accreditation;
- state licensure/certification (i.e., teachers, administrators, related and pupil services personnel, school boards and others.)

Identify and fund projects that demonstrate successful incorporation and implementation of the principles of UDL.

Provide greater detail in procurement and development for formative and summative assessments that incorporate principles of UDL.

<p>Include in educational legislation the following: <i>"Activities carried out in the states that are authorized under this ___ Act and supported by federal funds received under this Act will comply with the standards established by the Architectural Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (ATBCB) under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and the recommendations for publishers for UDL implementation."</i></p>
<p>Easier to Implement / Lower Level of Impact</p>
<p>Provide targeted grants that support community and technical colleges in applying UDL to meet the academic/employment needs of all their students.</p>
<p>Challenging to Implement / Lower Level of Impact</p>
<p>No recommendations were sorted into this category.</p>

Although participants agreed on most recommendations, two recommendations generated some degree of controversy. Several participants expressed concern about the recommendation to *"Include in all education legislation the following passage: Activities carried out in the states that are authorized under this ___ Act and supported by federal funds received under this Act will comply with the standards established by the Architectural Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (ATBCB) under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and the recommendations for publishers for UDL implementation."* Concerns stemmed primarily from a belief that this legislative language would significantly limit what LEAs could purchase and create more problems than solutions and support for UDL implementation.

Extended discussion also took place regarding the recommendation to *"Require new and revised grant applications to include language that grant activities will reflect UDL principles. (Note: the language will appear as a statement that the grantee has followed US Department of Education (ED)-supported principles of UDL rather than as a legally-binding assurance, e.g., 508 compliant, etc.)"* The discussion concerned how exactly assurances could be provided in the grant applications since assurances in federal grant applications are linked to specific federal laws or regulations and there is no specific law requiring the application of UDL principles, except for the recently reauthorized HEOA. Participants believed it would be effective to include a statement on the application whereby grantees agree that the application of UDL principles is a priority in the program(s) described in their grant application.

In addition, participants discussed the addition of language in federal legislation (such as NCLB and IDEA) to explicitly integrate UDL concepts and principles into education programs through these authorizing statutes and subsequent appropriations bills. However, they agreed to table their discussion and focus their limited time in this forum on recommendations and action plans in which significant progress could be made, with the understanding that the National UDL Task Force has already proposed language to integrate UDL into NCLB.¹⁸

¹⁸ Refer to <http://www.advocacyinstitute.org/UDL/NCLB.shtml>.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT UDL IMPLEMENTATION

The forum participants proposed strategies to begin implementation of six 'easier to implement/high level of impact' recommendations. These proposed strategies suggest initial steps that can be taken to support UDL implementation and are not all-inclusive or directive. Since many participants are already implementing UDL principles in the field, the proposed strategies integrate their current experiences and exemplify areas of support that could strengthen UDL implementation across the nation. Many participants expressed an interest in developing more extensive strategies for more recommendations, but were not able to complete the task at the forum due to time limitations.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT UDL IMPLEMENTATION - A

POLICY Recommendation: Build a consortium from which will evolve a national knowledge network that impacts the development and implementation of content standards, professional development standards and accreditation standards based on UDL principles.				
Can this be addressed in the <u>short term</u> or <u>long term</u>? Long Term				
Outcome Measure (how do we know we achieved success?) UDL principles are systemically applied nationally so all learners have opportunity to succeed.				
<i>Target Audience</i>	<i>Who should be involved?</i>	<i>Proposed Strategies/ Steps</i>	<i>Suggested timeframe</i>	<i>What resources are needed?</i>
National, state	Seek input across a variety of federal, state and local perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Define UDL best practices ▪ Identify existing standards and practices that exemplify the definition ▪ Develop planning and implementation tools that align UDL and the standards ▪ Make use of existing federal,* state and local dissemination networks <p>*Engage federally funded centers (comprehensive centers, labs etc.) via contract</p>	The work would take years to complete but the national network could be established at the federal level or by a consortium of SEAs in the next year (2009)	<p>Legislative language supporting UDL implementation</p> <p>Funding priority</p>

PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT UDL IMPLEMENTATION -B¹⁹

POLICY Recommendation: Develop a communications/dissemination plan for UDL for various content areas (e.g. reading and math) that is targeted to responsibilities and interests of various stakeholders.

- Series of U.S. Department of Education broadcasts on UDL UDL leadership academies
- Communities of practice for UDL UDL website
- Align to other practices such as co-teaching, Response to Intervention, Positive Behavioral Support

Outcome Measure (how do we know we achieved success?) This plan and its execution should be part of the scope of work of the national knowledge network referred to chart A.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT UDL IMPLEMENTATION - C

POLICY Recommendation: The Secretary of Education should convene a technical review board or working group (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), Office of Post-Secondary Education (OPE), Institute of Education Sciences (IES), etc.) to develop and publicize a reasonable set of features/recommendations for educational publishers/developers that support implementation of UDL based on the principles outlined in the UDL Guidelines, Version 1.0.²⁰

Can this be addressed in the short term or long term? Outcome: short term Goal: long term

Outcome Measure (how do we know we achieved success?)
 Outcome: Consensus, development, and dissemination of UDL recommendations.
 Goal: Voluntary adoption by SEAs, LEAs, and industry, and inclusion of those UDL features in instructional materials.

<i>Target Audience</i>	<i>Who should be involved?</i>	<i>Proposed Strategies/ Steps</i>	<i>Suggested timeframe</i>	<i>What resources are needed?</i>
National	U.S. Department of Education (e.g. including OSERS, OESE, OSEP, OPE, IES etc.) Educational publishers State representatives Local representatives Educational product developers UDL Experts UDL Stakeholders	Convene technical review board/working group that includes educational publishers, state representatives, local representatives, educational product developers (e.g. online delivery developers), experts and stakeholders.	Technical review board/workgroup convenes by Fall 2009 Consensus, development, and dissemination of recommendations by Summer 2010	Political support Financial support – estimate \$250,000 for two face-to-face meetings, telecom, supplies, administrative staff support, publishing, and dissemination

¹⁹ This chart is incomplete as participants believed it complements goals and strategies in chart A, and did not have time to complete the template in its entirety.

²⁰ Available at <http://www.cast.org/publications/UDLguidelines/version1.html>.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT UDL IMPLEMENTATION - D

POLICY Recommendation: Require new and revised grant applications to include language that grant activities will reflect UDL principles.
 (note: the language will appear as a statement that the grantee has followed U.S. Department of Education-supported principles of UDL rather than as a legally-binding assurance (508 compliant, etc)).

Can this be addressed in the short term or long term? Short Term

Outcome Measure (how do we know we achieved success?) Review panel has UDL criteria used in the evaluation of the proposal. Of the funded applications, 90% address UDL principles.

<i>Target Audience</i>	<i>Who should be involved?</i>	<i>Proposed Strategies/ Steps</i>	<i>Suggested timeframe</i>	<i>What resources are needed?</i>
Local	Grant applicants Local education agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of sample responses for grant applicants 	June 30, 2009	Knowledgeable UDL experts work with U.S. Department of Education to develop
State	Grant Applicants State education agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of sample responses for grant applicants 	June 30, 2009	Knowledgeable UDL experts work with U.S. Department of Education to develop
National	U.S. Department of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write the language for the grant applications ▪ Notify all individuals responsible for issuing grants ▪ Obtain public comment if required 	Process can begin now June 30, 2009	U.S. Department of Education officers make this a priority

PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT UDL IMPLEMENTATION - E

POLICY Recommendation: Establish federal competitive grant program to transform existing practices to reflect the UDL framework in the following areas: standards, instructional methods, curriculum, accountability/assessment systems and professional development beginning with a needs assessment and including evaluation and national dissemination of what works.

Can this be addressed in the short term or long term? Short term: draft language, build support, introduce bill. Long term: Get language in ESEA; get funding for program; implement program

Outcome Measure (how do we know we achieved success?) Outcome: federal grant program in legislation and funded

<i>Target Audience</i>	<i>Who should be involved?</i>	<i>Proposed Strategies/ Steps</i>	<i>Suggested timeframe</i>	<i>What resources are needed?</i>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National UDL Task Force 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft legislative language for competitive grant program ▪ Find member to introduce bill ▪ Build support to get language incorporated into ESEA ▪ Advocate for program funding 	6 months 1 year 1.5 -2 years (when ESEA is up for discussion) Once program established	Collaboration between stakeholders Time to meet with members of Congress
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Districts, principals, teachers trying to incorporate principles of UDL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with UDL Task Force to build support in Congress 	1-2 years	Time to meet with members of Congress
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ States supporters of UDL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with UDL Task Force to build support in Congress 	1-2 years	Time to meet with members of Congress
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member of Congress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduce bill ▪ Support bill in ESEA reauthorization ▪ Work for appropriations for program 	1 year 1.5-2 years Once program established	Congressional support

PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT UDL IMPLEMENTATION - F

POLICY Recommendation: Require every personnel preparation grant in general and special education to include instruction about UDL implementation and teach UDL in a manner that reflects the principles of UDL²¹.

Can this be addressed in the short term or long term?
 Changes in grant requirements can be addressed in a short term.
 Development of UDL environments can be addressed in the long term.

Outcome Measure (how do we know we achieved success?) Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) demonstrate UDL environments (course description, instructional strategies) that result in larger number of teachers with the demonstrated competencies to create UDL classrooms.

<i>Target Audience</i>	<i>Who should be involved?</i>	<i>Proposed Strategies/ Steps</i>	<i>Suggested timeframe</i>	<i>What resources are needed?</i>
National	U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education	Create a pilot personnel preparation grant application that requires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ change in university teacher practices, ▪ University curriculum to reflect the principles of UDL in its goals, methods, assessments and materials, ▪ collaboration between special education and general education departments, and dissemination of results from pilot to replicate in subsequent grant applications 	2009 Request for Proposals	No additional resources (fits into current practices)
Other	University grantees	Build capacity to fulfill grant requirements	Grant period	Grant funding

²¹ OSEP currently incorporates UDL as part of its personnel preparation priorities when appropriate. This recommendation focuses on universities providing specific instruction about UDL while also implementing UDL principles within its own instructional practices.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Participants at this policy forum demonstrated excitement about and commitment to ensuring UDL becomes integrated as a best practice in the field of education. Participants recommended that UDL as a practice be promoted across the nation to educators; administrators; parents; policymakers; curriculum, software and text developers and publishers; and students. To effectively advance the implementation of UDL, it is important to develop a national knowledge network supported by a technical review board convened by the Secretary of Education. Such a board would develop and publicize features and recommendations that support UDL implementation to impact not only educational software and materials, but also content standards, professional development standards and accreditation standards. Additionally, it would be beneficial to integrate UDL principles within federal and state-level grants with some type of agreement or assurances that the program described in the grant application incorporates UDL principles in its goals and activities. By working simultaneously on promoting UDL, developing policy that supports UDL implementation, conducting research and collecting data that demonstrates its effectiveness as a practice, there is greater likelihood for the integration of UDL principles in all aspects of education leading to greater student motivation and learning.

APPENDIX A

Examples of Programs and Resources for Implementing UDL Practices

(These are examples shared by participants at the UDL Policy Forum, not a complete or OSEP-approved listing of UDL activities.)

Building Inclusive Child Care is a video on building inclusive child care through UDL developed by Northampton Community College, Bethlehem, PA. For more information, go to <http://www.northampton.edu/bicc>.

California State University EnACT Project is a U.S. DOE-funded project supporting students with disabilities within the California State University (CSU) in attaining their postsecondary educational goals. EnACT provides faculty the skills, support, and training through UDL workshops, ongoing faculty learning communities, and accessible media resources to ensure that students with disabilities are provided a high quality postsecondary education. Currently, EnACT is being implemented across eight CSU campuses. <http://enact.sonoma.edu/>

Colorado State University (CSU) ACCESS II Project builds on preliminary, successful implementation and dissemination of UDL principles and strategies for creating inclusive classroom instruction and accessible course materials central to UDL. ACCESS II is working to provide evidence about UDL's effectiveness as a methodology for improving the learning experience and persistence of college students with disabilities. <http://accessproject.colostate.edu>

Faculty and Administrator Modules in Higher Education: Universal Design for Learning is a module from an on-line training tool for instructors in higher education that focuses on teaching and accommodating students with disabilities. The website also contains information on how college faculty and administrators, disability service providers and students can work together to improve the accommodations, teaching-learning process and overall campus environment for students with disabilities. <http://www.olin.org/ILT/ada/Fame>

Fast Facts for Faculty is a series of information briefs designed to help college and university instructors improve the climate and quality of education for students with disabilities. Topics include universal design for learning, coordinating internships for students with disabilities, guided notes, guidelines for creating web content accessible for all and sign language interpreting in the classroom. <http://ada.osu.edu/resources/fastfacts/index.htm>

Indiana UDL Pilot Program: A PATINS Project Statewide Initiative is a project that provides support to Indiana schools to implement UDL principles to the area of literacy/math in their classrooms. http://www.patinsproject.com/universal_design_for_learning_project.htm

Maryland Technology Plan has universal design language in the requirements that local technology plans must meet for approval. <http://marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/0E02FE13-0060-4AC2-AB92-2143C6C14185/14864/FinalRevisedTechPlanChecklist111907.pdf>

Measures of Fidelity to address UDL implementation – Michigan’s Integrated Technology Supports, Central Michigan University, CAST and Dean Fixsen from National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) (<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~nirn/>) are currently collaborating to identify the measures of fidelity by which to assess implementation. More information will be forthcoming at www.cast.org to provide guidance to districts to be able to assess UDL implementation.

National UDL Task Force offers resources, frequently answered questions, UDL fact sheets, and updates on legislative activities. <http://www.udl4allstudents.org>

Parent Advocacy Brief: A Parent’s Guide to Universal Design for Learning is resource article that describes UDL in an easily comprehensible manner to inform parents of its benefits and use in classrooms. http://www.ncl.org/images/stories/downloads/advocacy/advocates_guide/parentsguide-udl.pdf

Technology Resources for Education (T.R.E. Center) in New York is a one-stop resource for assistive technology and universal design for learning. It offers information, training, and other resources to enhance learning opportunities for individuals through technology. <http://www.trecenter.org>

Test Accessibility and Modification Inventory (TAMI) – This inventory from Vanderbilt University is an evaluation tool designed to facilitate comprehensive analysis of tests and test items in order to enhance access and meaningful responses from all students. <http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/tami.xml>

The Equity and Excellence in Higher Education: A Universal Design for Learning Collaboration is the website for a collaborative effort between several universities to advance universal access to education through the development of concepts and techniques of universal design and access, and educating faculty in these concepts and techniques. <http://www.ccids.umaine.edu/projects/ee-udl/default.htm>

UDL and Differentiated Instruction is a report that examines information on the theory and research behind differentiated instruction and the intersection with universal design for learning (UDL) that also provides a listing of Web resources for further information and explicit examples. http://www.cast.org/publications/ncac/ncac_diffinstructudl.html

UDL Lesson Builder is a free online resource to help educators create UDL-based lessons. <http://lessonbuilder.cast.org>
UDL Toolkits are a free online resource designed to support professional development providers and other educators conducting workshops in universal design for learning by providing resources for face-to-face training sessions and ongoing follow-up support. http://www.cast.org/teachingeverystudent/toolkits/tk_introduction.cfm?tk_id=61

UDL Trainings – Professional Development Offerings are websites that provide training specific to universal design for learning.

CAST: <http://www.cast.org/pd/index.html> or Harvard University: <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/ppe/k12/programs/ude.html>

APPENDIX B

List of Face-to-Face UDL Policy Forum Participants

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PROJECT FORUM